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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 000073

SENSITIVE

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AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PASS TO AMEMBASSY MALABO

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SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT OF SUDAN CONFIRMS SUDAN-CHAD PEACE AGREEMENT

REF: NDJAMENA 0028; NDJAMENA 0029; NDJAMENA 0030

CLASSIFIED BY: REWHITEHEAD, CDA, STATE, EXEC; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶11. (C) Summary. On January 17 Government of Sudan (GOS) Presidential Advisor Dr. Ghazi Salah Eddin briefed the Charge on the January 15 agreement between Sudan and Chad to end their proxy war, confirming information conveyed to Embassy Ndjamena by Chadian and UN officials (reftels). Ghazi described his most recent shuttles between Libya and Chad as well as the details of the agreement that, if successfully implemented, will by March 21 (at the latest) bring to an end nearly five years of cross border hostilities. The agreement, which Ghazi emphasized was bilateral in nature, is based on the 2006 Protocol signed by the GOS and Government of Chad (GOC). He commented at length on a meeting with Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) leader Khalil Ibrahim, who continues to maintain a hard line. At the conclusion of the meeting with Charge, Ghazi digressed about current dynamics between the North and the South of Sudan as the country gears up for the April national elections. We see the January 15 Sudan-Chad Agreement as a potential game-changer in dealing with Darfur. End summary.

Peace in our Time

¶12. (C) On January 17, Charge met with Dr. Ghazi Salah Eddin, who had just returned from a week in Ndjamena and Tripoli with a bilateral normalization agreement in hand. Ghazi described the signed agreement as satisfactory in that it had committed both Chad and Sudan to a lock-step process to end the use of Chadian rebels on Sudanese soil and Sudanese rebels (principally JEM) in Chad to wage proxy war against the other country. He said that the Chadians had initially been difficult to pin down but that eventually GOC officials had admitted to the support they had provided to the JEM since 2006. In response to Charge's query, Ghazi admitted that the GOS had also come clean on its support for Chadian rebels. The result was a normalization agreement that included provisions to dismantle the armed opposition harbored on each side of the border. A section in the agreement encouraged armed rebel movements to engage in talks with their respective governments, and another provision provided for GOS and GOC officials to talk with "their" rebels on the other country's territory. The highlight of the agreement was a formula by which the rebels are given the choice of disarmament and refugee status where they are currently located, or voluntary return to their country of origin. Ghazi did not describe the third option, exile in a third country, cited in Ndjamena reporting. The timetable for

completion of the disarmament/return phase is February 21, with a March 21 extension possible if one side or the other finds it difficult to implement all the provisions.

¶3. (C) Ghazi stressed that the agreement is bilateral in nature and does not refer back to earlier regional or multilateral agreements. The Chadians were explicitly opposed to any mention of the Sirte Agreement, and although Sudan is not adverse to the use of the Dakar mechanism, this does not factor into the agreement. Instead, the basis was the 2006 Chad-Sudan protocol. The agreement elaborated the border points to be used by prescribed number of joint forces organized under joint leadership to patrol and monitor the border. Ghazi said that there would be no direct role for either UNAMID or the AU but said that he expected the mechanism to improve UNAMID access in border areas of Darfur. He noted that the agreement also refers to measures to counter cross-border carjacking and banditry, which have been on the rise even as military confrontations between rebels and Sudanese forces in Darfur have waned.

JEM's Khalil Ibrahim, the Fly in the Ointment

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¶4. (C) Ghazi said that the GOS views the agreement as a major step in moving the situation in Darfur from a military to a political plane, and that hopefully this would be reflected in Doha meeting slated to begin January 21. He noted that there is still resistance from some quarters, especially the JEM. He described his three-hour meeting with JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim that took place after the agreement was signed. Khalil hewed to the usual hard line that he was the only legitimate national opposition leader and controlled sufficient military force to conquer all of Sudan when he so chose. Khalil also claimed that he is normally based in Darfur and had traveled to Chad only because the GOC had requested his presence there. He dismissed the Addis Ababa Group as the creation of Special Envoy Gration and the Tripoli Group as a stalking horse for the Libyans and National Congress Party (NCP). Khalil said that he categorically refused to participate in the upcoming Doha meetings. Ghazi said that despite this bluster, the JEM leader nonetheless noted that wanted to talk. Ghazi said that GOS intelligence has identified emerging cracks in JEM structures as various JEM elements rethink their future in light of the agreement.

5 (C) Ghazi said that his attempts to draw out Khalil on how to proceed with talks between the GOS and JEM on security arrangement and power sharing had elicited mostly "crazy" ideas. Khalil described his program for recovery in Darfur in which every Darfurian affected by the war would receive a new house, free gasoline, and various other benefits. His plan included massive national road and infrastructure programs. Khalil said that he would prevent the secession of the South by offering Southerners new houses in the North. Ghazi, who queried Khalil on the price tag for this undertaking, observed that it weighed in at about USD 6 billion for the first year, in the context of a total annual projected GOS budget of slightly less than USD 8 billion. Ghazi said that while compensation would be a necessary part of any global solution to Darfur, a dose of realism was in order. He turned briefly to his visit to Tripoli, where the Libyans had pushed for the Tripoli Group to be included in Doha, to which the GOS agreed. Ghazi said that he was scheduled to meet with President Bashir and senior security and military officials on January 18 to discuss implementation of the agreement. Charge asked how the USG can be of help, and Ghazi replied that a public

statement noting the positive outcome would be in order, along with a call for both sides to take seriously their commitments.

Looking Southward, Briefly

¶6. (C) Ghazi, who is also deeply involved in negotiations between the NCP and Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), admitted that the recent focus on the agreement with Chad had come at the expense of the southern portfolio. He said that nonetheless press reports claiming that the NCP had granted the SPLM a specific number of additional National Assembly seats were inaccurate - there was not yet a final agreement on seats or the use of the 2008 census. He said that no mechanism had been identified to deal with the 20 percent of disputed borderline between the North and South. He said that the NCP was presently consumed with nominating its candidates for the April elections and said that he believed this to be equally true for the SPLM, distracting both sides from outstanding Comprehensive Peace Agreement (between the North and South) issues. He said that the nomination of Yasser Armut as the SPLM candidate for the national presidency was probably due to Armut's influence over Salva Kiir. Despite their public praise for Armut, he said, both Pagan Amum and Malik Agar were reportedly unhappy that they had not received the nod.

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Comment

¶7. (C) The Sudan-Chad Agreement represents a potentially significant step forward. If successfully implemented, the Agreement has potential to not only shore up regional stability, but also to move the conflict in Darfur toward the negotiating table and away from the battlefield, which had already become increasingly quiet over the past year. Without safe haven in Chad and direct military support from the GOC (and possibly Libya), the JEM would no longer pose a significant armed threat to Khartoum, and Khalil Ibrahim's inability to pursue a military solution would likely isolate him politically, and possibly force him to alter his hard-line. There are still some difficult unknowns in this equation, including hundreds of armed Chadian oppositionist still present in North Darfur. The agreement stipulates their disarmament, but their willingness to lay down their weapons is questionable, although we judge that the Sudanese are capable of prevailing on this point. With support for Abdul Wahid waning among some military commanders from his faction of the Sudanese Liberation Army, reducing (but not eliminating) his capacity to play a spoiling role, prospects for progress in the stalled Doha process are as positive as they have been for some time.

WHITEHEAD